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Bounded Surfaces

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May 2008

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Introduction



Above and below: Details from *Jean-Luc's Eyebrow* (see section 3 for full image)



What is a surface? The thing you can touch? The part you can see? Is a surface a region— a bracketed zone— the space between here and there? Where does a surface start and end?

J. J. Gibson writes that surfaces reflect and absorb light and provide the information perceivable by our visual senses. Because of these phenomena surfaces are where the action of vision occurs.¹ The seams, edges, corners, shapes, margins and borders delineated by surfaces structure the visual world that we inhabit.

The relationship between surface, perception, and structure has occupied my graduate studies. Locating, transforming, and transcending the surface requires play with perceptive abilities not only of vision, but of touch, hearing, and the other senses as well. How do the interactions of sense with the qualities of a surface determine our perception of the world? What role does the extension of the senses play in

one's ability to perceive surface and structure?

Using sense information gleaned from surfaces, the tectonics of our world are made visible. Might this relationship be played backwards as well? Composed structures produce surfaces upon which limina can be sensed.

Avrum Stroll observes that the notion of a surface is split between its conception as an abstract entity, and its conception as a physical entity.² This bifurcation somewhat confuses the causal relationship between surface and information. Does the structured physical entity of the surface yield information to the senses based on our perceptual abilities? Or, does the information already contained in the surface provide an affordance for our perceptions? The extension of our senses through tools and technology is opening up new kinds of spaces in which to experience surface, analogous to the way in which an echo opens up an auditory space.

Stroll also explores the idea of the surface as a boundary zone. This concept is essential to my work, in that it follows G.A. Samorjai's similar identification of surface as an interface or a system:³ a zone where operations may be performed. In other words, a surface is a place where a relationship is afforded to occur, prompting Gibson's idea that "it is the relation between the outside world and the perceiver [the relation as a surface between the two] that is significant."⁴

This written accompaniment to the thesis works is intended to continue the exploration of the surface/sense/structure relationship. With the visual work as a basis, each section consists of two parts: this structure is a tool for producing sense information for the viewer concerning the visual work.

The first part serves as a bridge between the particular visual work and the second part. Consisting of a page or so of text, the first part of each section is also intended to set a tone or position the reader for the second. The second is more formal and speaks about the ideas behind the produced object, and for the most part could be applied to any works in this thesis. My desire is that the adjacency of the pieces in each section will create a friction of sorts—an awareness of the surface between the two writings, and perhaps, between the writing and the objects.

Like cricket legs making music, waves lapping a shore, or branches antagonizing a window, the intersections of these pieces are meant to invite the senses beyond the visual work or the writing alone. To underscore and illustrate this point, I offer as prologue an excerpt

by Yve Lomax, a practicing visual artist who also understands how reading can enrich an experience. My hope is the creation of a possible 'twittering-tree' between the written and visual parts of the thesis.



Detail from *Jean-Luc's Eyebrow* (see section 3 for full image)

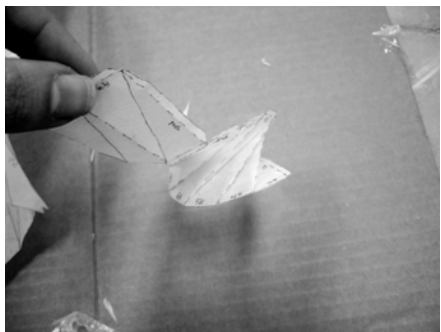
¹ Gibson, J.J. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979. See Chapter 9.

² Stroll, Avrum. *Surfaces*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota press, 1988, 13.

³ Samorjai, G.A. "Surface Science." *Science*, v. 201, 1978, 489-497.

⁴ Restle, Frank. "The Seer of Ithaca." *Contemporary Psychology*, v.25 no.4 (1980) 291-293.

Prologue



Studies of structure and
connectivity, 2008

A Twittering Noise¹

She spoke of a tree that stood close by what was, for a week, her dwelling place. She said it was a tall tree. She said it was what you'd call a pine-tree. She spoke of how each evening a hundred small brown birds would congregate in the tree and make a loud commotion. She said others staying nearby would complain. A racket they said. A din. But she would listen, and as she did, the noise became a daily refrain.

She told me that a hundred small brown birds could not be counted for as they congregated they became indistinguishable from the pine-cones that issued from the tree. She said that you could not tell where the bird began and the pine-cone ended. Looking at the tree – and look she did – no winged beast could clearly be seen. All that could be seen was an agitated tree quivering sonorously: a twittering-tree. She told me she had wondered if the birds had set out to imitate pine-cones. She said that she had also found herself asking questions

about imitation itself. She said that she had had to ask: 'Are not cases of imitation always tottering on the brink of self destruction? How can something imitate something else without what is imitated itself becoming something else? With imitation don't both imitator and imitated become something other than what they are?'

She said that as the week passed her thinking had also started twittering.

'...It's not that small brown bird is transformed into equally small brown pine-cone but rather that there is a continual passing from one to the other. That it cannot be told where one begins and the other ends has the effect of making both become other than what they are whilst remaining, in one respect, what they are. This *becoming* is no production of an imitation; rather, what is produced is a zone of indiscernability...'

She said that her thinking was still twittering, and after the shortest of pauses she went on to say that the

continual passing from bird to pine-cone made both bird and cone wobble, quiver and vacillate. Then she said that this continual passing sang out that both bird and pine-cone were open to being affected by each other. Yes, what passed between bird and pine-cone was affectivity; it was affectivity that made both quiver and vacillate. And she continued by saying that this vacillating movement had had the effect of making a vibration sing between bird and pine-cone. Then she said that what this singing sounded to her ears was the creation of musical being.

After her pausing and me waiting for her to say more, she took a little intake of breath and spoke of how there hadn't been a transformation of a pine-cone into a chirping twittering bird but rather a conjugation of both. She said that this conjugation was what made for, each evening, a becoming that quivered with the creation of musical being.

But to whom or what did this being and this becoming belong?

She said that in one sense it belonged to both bird and pine-cone but in another sense belonged to neither. She said that becoming was twofold but this double-act meant that the becoming was irreducible to either bird or pine-cone. She said she wasn't sure if belonging was the right word.

Then she said that as birds and pine-cones each evening entered into composition with each other there was a transformation of the functional features of a bird's twitter and a tree's seed.

— 'But of the composition that happened – the twittering-tree – are we to call it art or are we to call it nature?'

She said that some would call it an event.²

Was that the end of her story?

'No,' she said, 'the end hasn't happened yet.'

Thereupon she spoke of how it was only the one tree that was chosen from all the trees thereabout. She said that although the birds favoured the one tree it was not the birds alone that each evening caused the twittering-tree to come into existence. She said that the twittering-tree was not the result of that tree having to passively suffer the action of those birds. She said that the twittering-tree could only have come about because both the tall pine-cone-issuing tree and the mass of small brown birds had a capacity – a power – to affect each other and enter into composition and make something happen between them, which belonged to neither. She said that from the singular – small brown bird conjugating with small brown pine-cone – to the plural – tall tree amass with pine-cones conjugating with a mass of small brown birds – the twittering-tree quivered with interaction and that this was its song. She said that the quivering could be heard and it could be seen.

Then she spoke of how the quivering was what made the twittering-tree's time, its life-time. She said the quivering was what held the twittering-tree together, what gave it consistency,

what gave it body, even though this body wasn't fleshy and had something incorporeal about it. She said that it was the quivering that gave existence to the twittering-tree. She said that as trembling as this existence might have been, it was an existence no less, even though some would say of this existence that it was fleeting, more of a short-lived performance than an enduring rock-like being. Short-lived it may have been, and a performance also, but being there was. Something had been created, even if its appearance each evening was predicated upon its disappearance.

She then went on to say that in its transformation of the functional features of a bird's chirp and a tree's seed the twittering-tree also quivered with an undecidability as to whether its creation was art or natural technique. But, whether it was to be called art or whether it was to be called nature, being there was.

She said that there was being yet she couldn't say to whom or what this could be attributed, said to

belong to, or be the possession of. She said that perhaps the twittering-tree was proposing something to her in respect of a mode of being that doesn't require a subject, let alone one that is human centric. Had the twittering-tree something to teach her? She said that what she had learnt from the twittering-tree was that it couldn't be spoken of – then as now – by simply saying *The tree is twittering* or, indeed, *The birds in the tree are twittering*. She said that to have uttered such sentences would have been to overlook what she could only call the event of the twittering-tree and, in so doing, ignore what the twittering-tree had to teach in respect to this.

And then I said that I wanted to hear more of what she had learnt from the twittering-tree in respect of its existence being called an event.

And then she said: 'Bear with me while I try to explain.'

And then I said: 'I'm all ears.'

And then she continued.

'I am speaking. The tree is twittering. At school I was taught that such simple sentences consist of a subject and a predicate. The lesson was simple: the predicate is what is said of the subject. Yes, the lesson was simple, as simple as A, B, C: *speaking* and *twittering* is what is said of the subject *I* and *tree*. I remember the lesson well: the subject precedes the predicate just as A precedes B. The subject comes first and the predicate is to be regarded as belonging to it. However, what I learnt from the twittering-tree was something quite different to this.

'To have said The tree is twittering or The birds in the tree are twittering would have been to attribute the twittering to a tree-subject or a plural bird-subject. But, strictly speaking, the twittering of the twittering-tree could not be attributed to either, or both, of these subjects. What the twittering-tree could be attributed to was the zone of indiscernability – the affectivity and quivering – that passed between, indeed twittered between, both tree and birds, which as such belonged to neither yet made both become musical being. Yes, it can be said that this was the real

subject of the twittering-tree. Which is to say that the real subject – if indeed I dare use such a term – was the act and process of conjugation whereby both tree and birds and pine-cones and, perhaps, the time of day entered into composition with each other and became something other than what they were whilst, at the same time, remaining what they were. The real subject was the coming about of this becoming, it was the performance of the process of composition. The performing subject was the process, and this comprised of nothing but the activity of affecting, agitating, vibrating, quivering, twittering. This is what can be said of the twittering-tree: it voiced pure verballity. Indeed, what could be heard – and seen – were verbs passing into the infinitive – to affect, to agitate, to vibrate, to quiver, to twitter. And verbs in the infinitive have no particular subject; what they refer to is the performance of the activity, which can only be spoken of as the indefinite "it."

‘What can be said of the twittering-tree is that its being was purely act and performance. Yes, a performance through and through. Yet of this it could not be said that there was a definite performing subject or artist. A performance without a performing subject; or, at least, the subject performing was not one that was already made before the performance. What the twittering-tree taught me, and is still teaching me, is that the predicate is an act, a performance in motion and not a state attributable to a subject. What the predicate speaks of is a coming about and this, what is more, we can call an event.

‘So, this is the lesson I am learning: an event is the act or process of something “in the making,” which can also be the process of something becoming undone. To have said *The tree is twittering* or *The birds in the tree are twittering* and taken it for granted that the twittering belonged to a tree-subject or a bird-subject would have been to overlook and ignore what the verbal noise of the twittering-tree sounded and sung of with respect to predicates and events. What the twittering-tree is teaching me is that there can be *being* without this having to center upon a subject.’

Then I said that the lesson taught to her by the twittering-tree begged the

question: ‘What is to become of the subject if the predicate is said to be an event?’

To this she responded by saying: ‘Perhaps it too will become an event.’

And I couldn’t help but then ask: ‘So, is an event going to happen; or, has it happened already?’

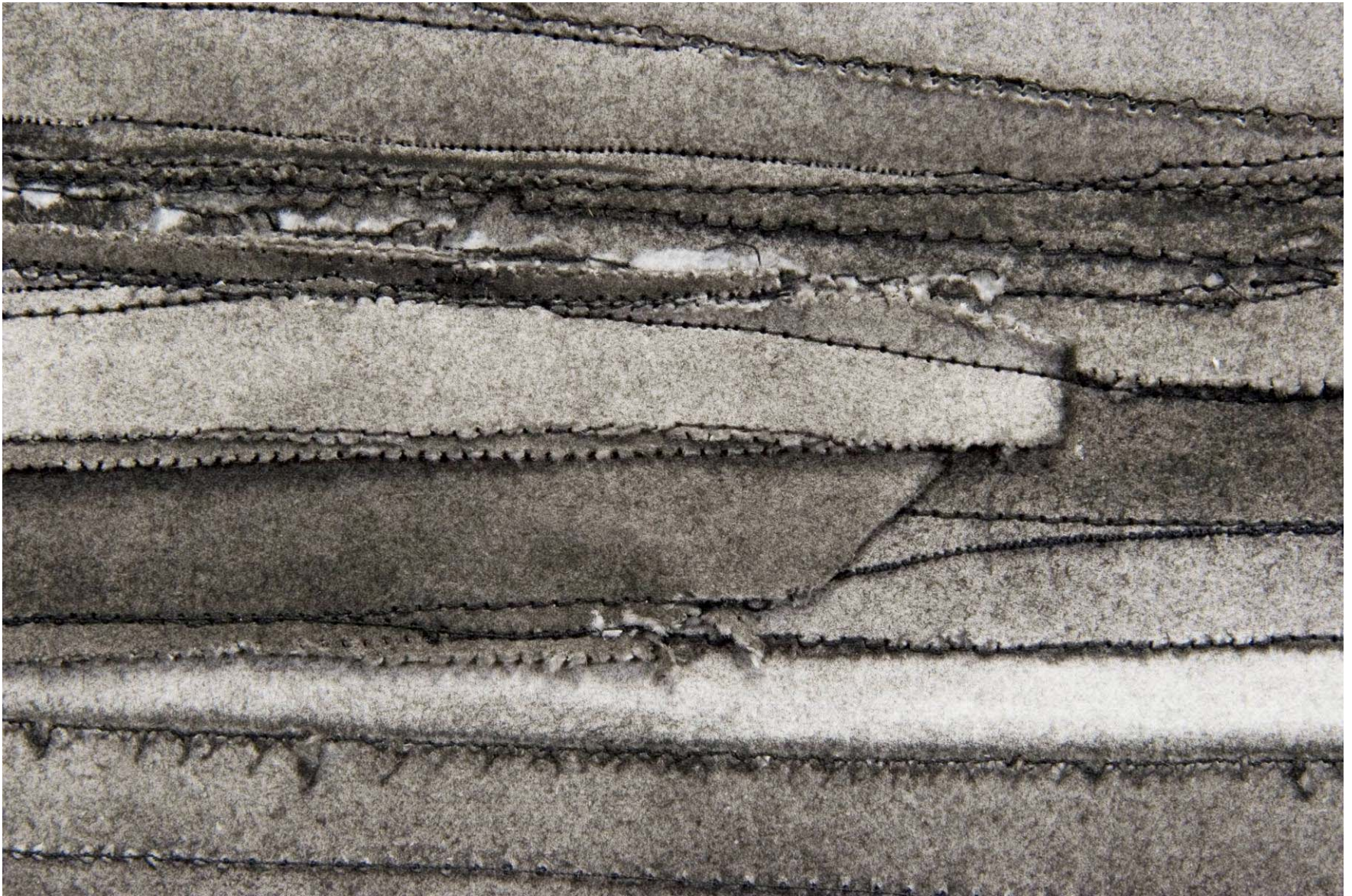
She knew, as I knew, that the question didn’t expect an immediate answer.

– Yve Lomax

¹ Lomax, Yve. *Sounding the Event: Escapades in Dialogue of Art, Nature, and Time*. London: I.B. Taurus, 2005.

² Badiou defines event: “[1] An event – of a given evental site – is the multiple composed of: on the one hand, elements of the site; and on the other hand, itself (the event). [2] Self-belonging is thus constitutive of the event. It is an element of the multiple, which is. [3] The event interposes itself between the void and itself. It will be said to be an ultra-one (relative to the situation).” Badiou, Alain. *Being and Event*. New York: Continuum, 2007.

Identity, Place, Space



Ransom Free Road, detail, 2006.

Ransom Free Road

We never can tell how a place will affect us.

What particular enchantment of the senses provides the exchange of a piece of our being? The place lives now inside of me, and I suspect that part of me remains there. Would you notice if you drove by? Does it only count at night, when the worlds grow thin? Because that is how I remember it: a fog, a veil—luminescent in the dark.

There is a house there now. Do the children inside see my ghost in the moonlight—a living shade drawn to peace? Do I raise my finger to my lips to silence them and cup my hand to ear so that they may listen? Will they hear what I heard in the distance? Would it mean anything to them?

My eyes were stolen. My eyes were opened.

In this place, waiting, crouched, in a ditch, in the grass. I needed the rebellious excuse of where I was going for the plim moment of being here, now. I was full in this place. I can't see a thing. And I am truly alive.

Moisture creeps up my pant legs. Sometimes I hear a fat drop fall. That was real grass, tall and strong, best friends with the wet smell of earth. The night is not still—not plants or animals or people. My ears and nose take everything in. I am an animal, a beast, a creature. I am a waving frond, the falling drop, a leaf on asphalt.

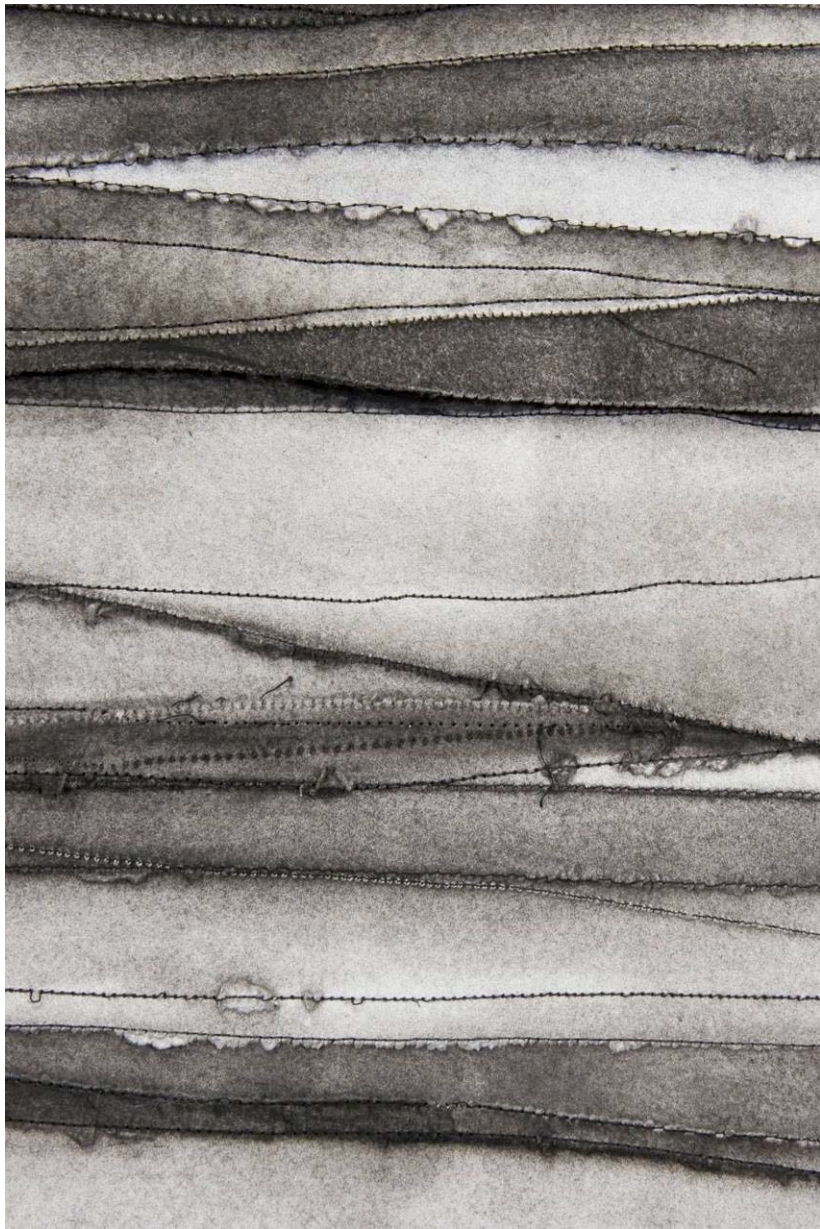
This place by the road is magic. I didn't know then what midnight at a

crossroads was supposed to mean. Does it still count if it's more like two a.m.?

I hear every car coming for ages before it reaches the stop sign. They roll up, or roll through, one at a time, spaced apart. Who knew so many people are out at this time of night? I might see four or five while I wait. One stops slowly and flashes its lights.

Sometimes I wonder—what would happen if I just stayed here and didn't go anywhere at all? Twine my fingers into the blades and refuse to move? How long would it take someone to notice?

This is why I have agreed to this—for this moment in the dark.



Ransom Free Road, detail, 2006.



Ransom Free Road, detail, 2006.

*Ransom Free Road: The Space of Freedom*¹

*Space reaches out from us and translates the world.—Rainer Maria Rilke*²

Concepts of identity marked my initial studies in graduate school. Relocating yet again to a new city kept the spatiality of identity in the front of my mind, supported by my interests in memory and embodiment. Spatiality, memory, and embodiment are intimately related to the formation of personal identity.



Spiral Jetty, 1970.

What I realized through traveling is that places have identities as much as

people do and, like people, a place “needs to be recognized in terms not only of individuality but of contextuality, as a product of both nature and nurture.”³ People and places are necessarily located at specific intersections of space and time. Recognizing this similarity, I began drawing a portrait (of myself) and a landscape (of a particular place) at a series of moments in my memory. The work of Robert Smithson was an influence on this piece.⁴



Spiral Jetty, 1970.

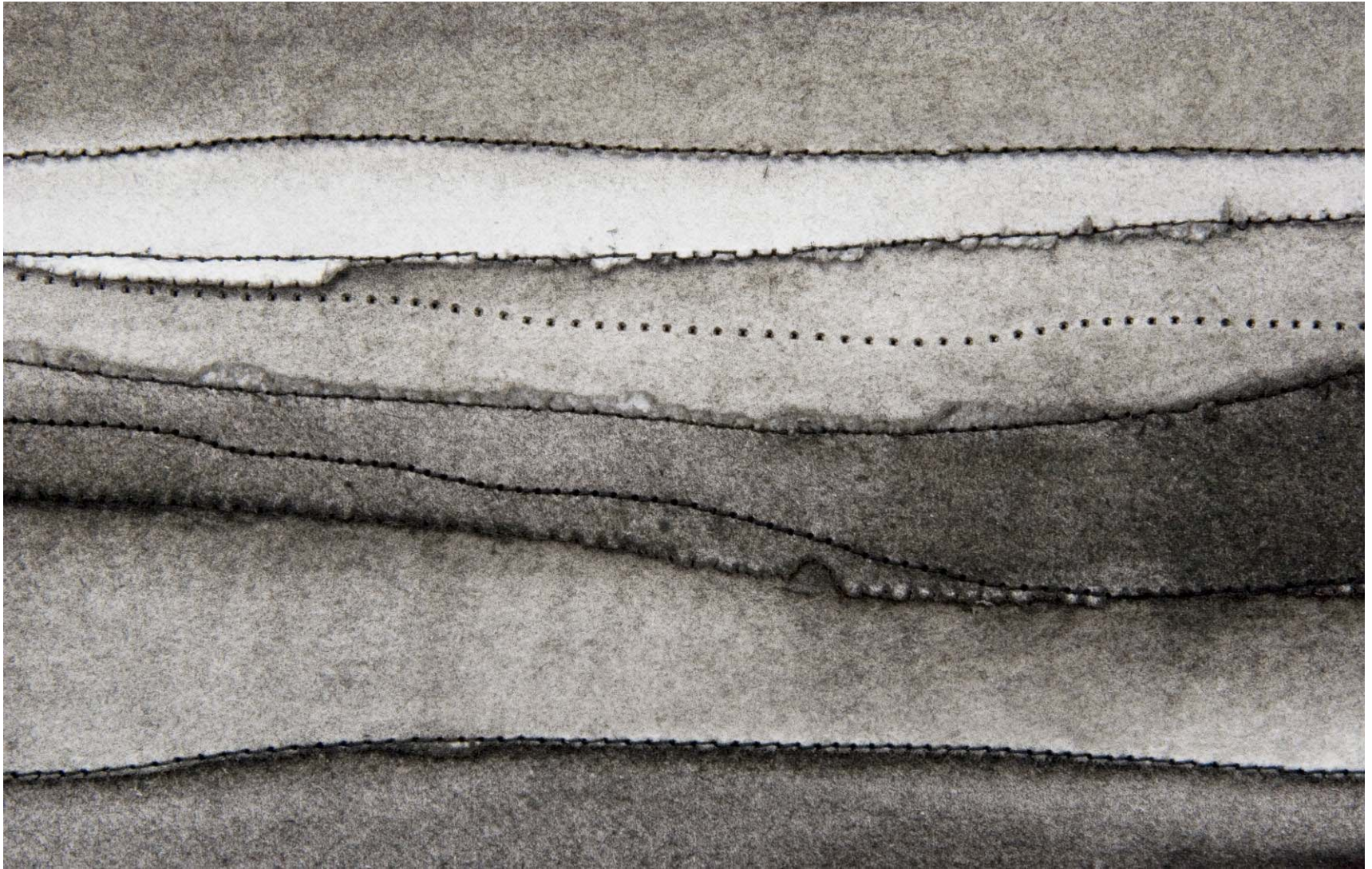
Though *Ransom Free Road* depicts the event of a three-way intersection of person, place, and moments plucked from memory, Smithson’s earthwork *Spiral Jetty* is similar in that it seeks to

create such an event in the present for the viewer/participant. The viewer is invited to enter the piece, to experience it in different lights and different times of day. *Spiral Jetty* functions as a space in which it is possible to experience this three way interaction, while *Ransom Free Road* is the record of such an event.



Spiral Jetty, 1970.

As an inventory of sorts, *Ransom Free Road* is successful in its distinct and palpable sense of place, time, smell, and tactile information. These aspects contribute to the sense of narrative in the work, not in the sense of telling an ordered story, but in the sense of infusing an object with the sense of lived history.



Ransom Free Road, detail, 2006.

The viewer's experience of the object/record that I've made is a continuation, translation, and interaction with the event of my memory. The act of making helps me to see better.

This is not to say that the object should be 'read' in the same way that it was created. Gabor Csepregi points out "...when one's own being continuously becomes the object of critical scrutiny, the capacity for spontaneous actions, intricate rhythmic patterns, and creative mimetic gestures is also paralyzed."⁵ Rather than skimming the surface of what I think I see, my focus is placed outside myself, using the challenge of mimetic gesture to rediscover the capacity of my hands. Like dancing,

the shapes in my mind adapt to the sensed reality. In this way Csepregi believes our bodies gain "a sympathetic understanding of the observable and non- observable world."⁶

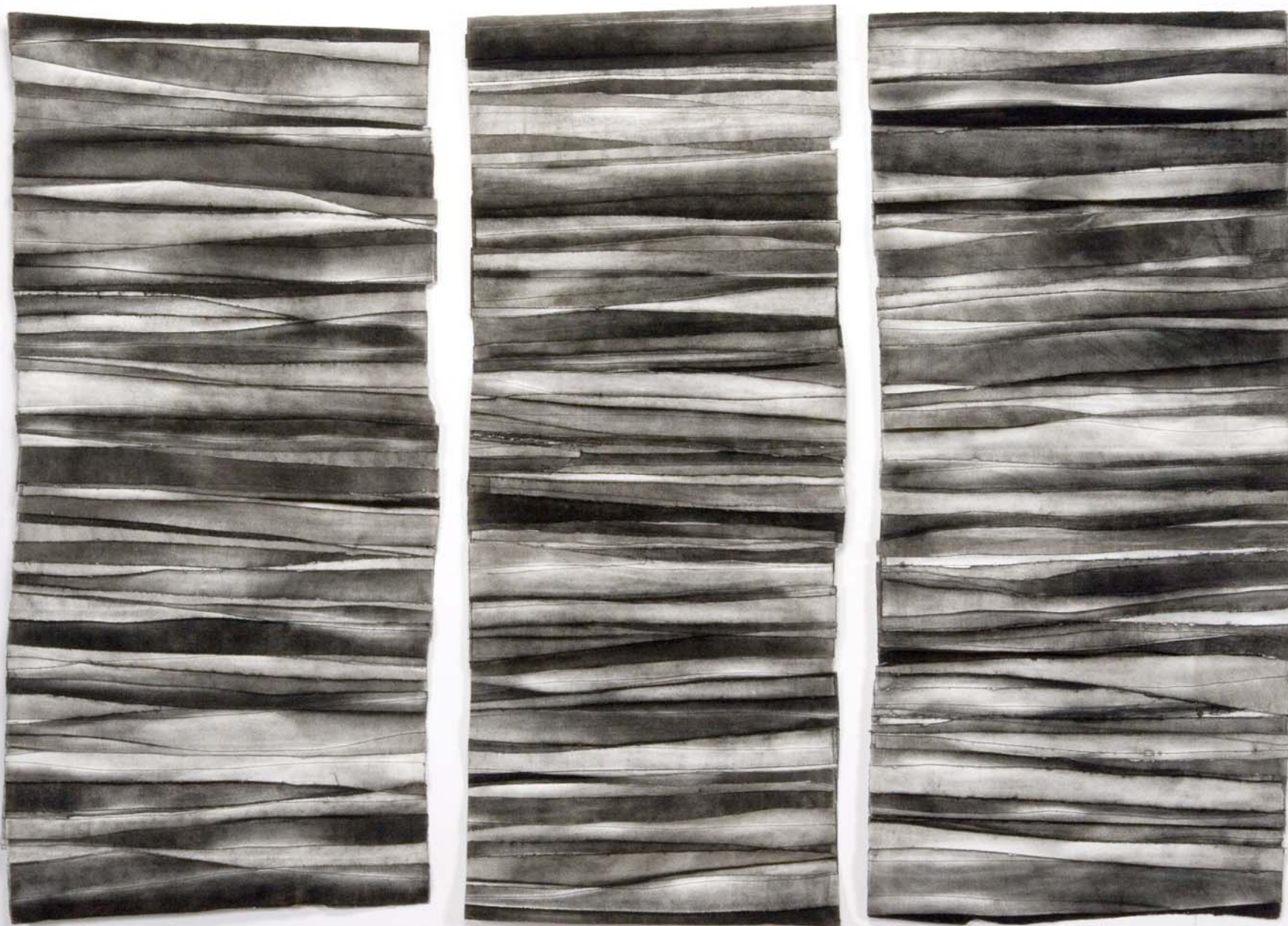
In this sense, *Ransom Free Road* was a transitional step in my consideration of both surface and form. Previous works included repetition, attention to surface, and multiples. However, during the making of this piece, the surfaces took on actual dimension, breaking the two-dimensional picture plane.

The new habit of working in low relief emerged and remained in my work throughout my graduate experience. Even as early as this piece, I believe the

low relief stems from an attempt to connect physical and mental senses of the world. The desire to touch thoughts is a motivating force, and the break from the two-dimensional picture plane is perhaps a way for me to pull thoughts and ideas into bodily space.

By making, I hope to develop new relationships/understandings with both the thoughts and the objects created, through my mental and physical interactions with their new form. This pathic response utilizes the innate consciousness of the body, which "knows more than we are able to explain by words."⁷

Thinking, in order to be thought, must itself become something other than a seeing or knowing; it must make itself the surprise of/in its 'object.' - Jean-Luc Nancy⁸



Ransom Free Road, 2006; charcoal, paper, thread.

¹ See map below.

² Rilke, Rainer Maria. "What Birds Plunge Through is Not the Intimate Space." *Ahead of All Parting: The Selected Poetry and Prose of Rainer Maria Rilke*. Ed. and trans. Stephen Mitchell. New York: The Modern Library, 1995.

³ Baker, Alan R. H. "On ideology and Landscape" in *Ideology and Landscape in Historical Perspective: Essays on the Meanings of Some Places in the Past*. Alan R. H. Baker and Gideon Biger, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 2.

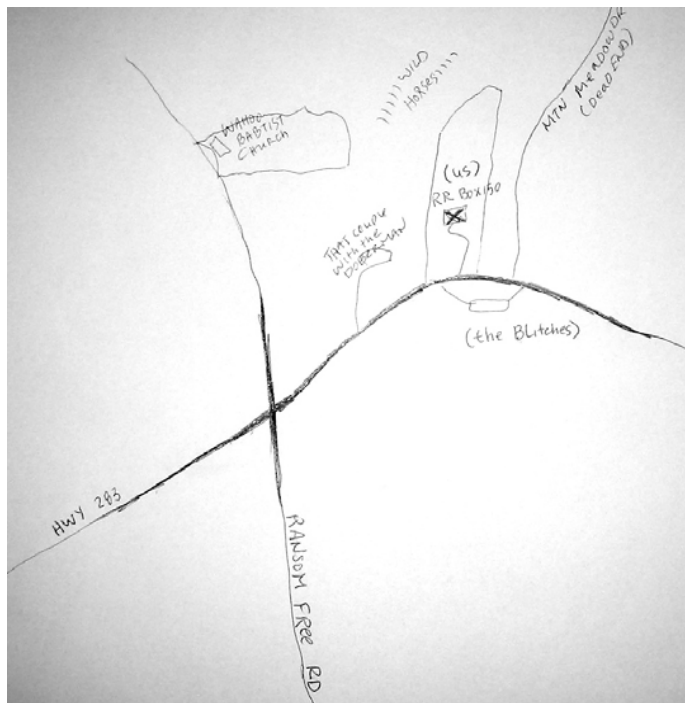
⁴ Robert Smithson/James Cohan Gallery. *Robert Smithson*. www.robertsmithson.com

⁵ Csepregi, Gabor. *The Clever Body*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006, 7.

⁶ Ibid., 73.

⁷ Ibid., 26.

⁸ Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Being Singular Plural*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000, 169.



Above: Hand drawn map, 2008

Symbolic of Logic



Symbolic of Logic (detail), 2007

How strange is that kind of comprehension that aims to encompass the whole. How strange that kind of understanding that aims to identify everything. Mental life producing only grids and the et cetera. Resentful of disturbances, resentful of the passage of time that washes over every content assimilated, it ends in contentment, the torpid satisfaction over content assimilated. Vitality drives another kind of understanding-one that opens up more, goes further. Such understanding is hilarious and grieving, blessing and cursing.

-Alphonso Lingis¹

Symbolic of Logic

Language is a mystery to me.

Relations between people are expressed in language (spoken, written, body, etc). Communication fascinates me—the way information passes from one person to another, how it gets changed, and how remarkable it is that we can communicate anything at all.

What must it be like to carry such a burden? I imagine a tiny vehicle, a pod, encapsulating precious cargo. Can you see it? Winding its way through a nebulous structure, no two blockages the same. On the journey from origin to destination a path must be picked out, without knowledge of the shape or size of the next impediment. Fortunately, both the

vessels and the structure are organic, malleable. The vessel passes through, often with room to spare, sometimes both structure and vessel must accommodate each other. This exertion changes both—the vessel is squeezed, the structure is stretched—and therefore alters the shape of possible interactions for both as well.

You have changed me.

I made you with my hands. We learned about each other. Cross and cross and cross—I constructed each possible passage, and then you awoke to your own will. More beautiful than I could have imagined, more perfect than my design. Becoming other—that's the structure—to lose yourself in making and then find

yourself at home again. I expanded and contracted my lungs for you until we expanded and contracted together, and eventually you breathed on your own.

Layer by layer I watch you become alien to yourself. You multiply, proliferate, create new others. You tell yourself no secrets, each iteration a new dissection of a boundary, a new bracketing of between. The vessels of others pass through; new connections and estrangements are made. Viewed in this way I can't help but smile. How foolish of me to believe that by making a thing I could understand it. How funny that the agent that carried this message was you—and I still don't know what you look like.



Symbolic of Logic (details), 2007

Symbolic of Logic: Touching an Idea

How does one corporealize an idea?

Keeping in mind my ideas about the physical act of drawing and the new relationship between the object and viewer, I set out to embody structure through which language must make its way to be of any use. This work was seminal in causing me to come to a pathic understanding of the physical processes used in making my work.

Visual repetition has long been an integral component of my work, but for the first time with *Symbolic of Logic*, this characteristic became very labor intensive. Considering repetition and labor as possible vehicles for meaning, I reflected on

when these tools could be like a mantra (meditative, awake, aware) and when might they become automatic (rote, given, a barrier to awareness). The work was not just about creating an object, but about sensitizing my perception of the world. This piece became the focus of my extended efforts for the remainder of the semester.

Titled *Symbolic of Logic*, the work is built of layers, each representing an obstacle (person, event, circumstance, or action) that an expression of communication (a word, gesture, sound, etc.) would be required to pass. These layers are transparent to allow one to view through them, but are also

slightly reflective, so that at certain angles they are completely opaque. Stitched into the transparent vinyl layers are machine-embroidered orifices, built up from thousands of crossings of individual thread.

The openings are soft, flexible, and organic, emphasizing my view of them as vibrant, changing entities. This also gives them the function, like flesh, of being able to stretch and give passage to objects larger than the appearance of the opening, possibly altering the orifice permanently. The passages were not arranged in a logical sequence, leaving each vehicle to find its own way through a plurality of choices.

Some of these aesthetic decisions were inspired by the work of Ernesto Neto and the writing of Gabor Csepregi.

Neto's space-filling installations² give the participant a sense of moving through an organic structure.

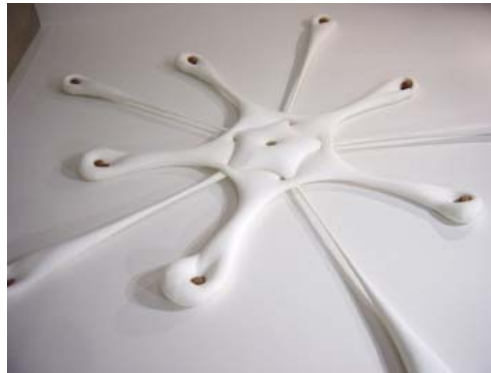


Ernesto Neto, *Pantheon*, 2006

His work is sensual and highly tactile and seems to visually capture the idea of process within a system.



Ernesto Neto, from *The Malmo Experience*, 2006



Ernesto Neto, *Extase*, 2007

Csepregi's writing was also instrumental in shaping my thought process in this piece. In the previous section, Csepregi was referenced in regard to the body being able to know without being able to explain. He goes on to write that "we may consider... these experiences as *pathic* in the sense that they are preconceptual and involve a bodily response. Pathic is the characteristic feature of communication itself: it is a transforming relationship to a situation that personally affects us in some way."³

Also, the relationship between repetition and quantity became amplified. What does multiplying or proliferating an element do to the element and to the piece as whole? What is the difference between using identical elements and allowing the elements to express similarity and, by extension, express difference? This last question opened the next body of work.



Symbolic of Logic (details), 2007

¹ Lingis, Alphonso. "The Unlived Life is Not Worth Examining," *Portraits of American Continental Philosophers*. James Watson, ed. Indiana University Press, 1999, 119- 125.

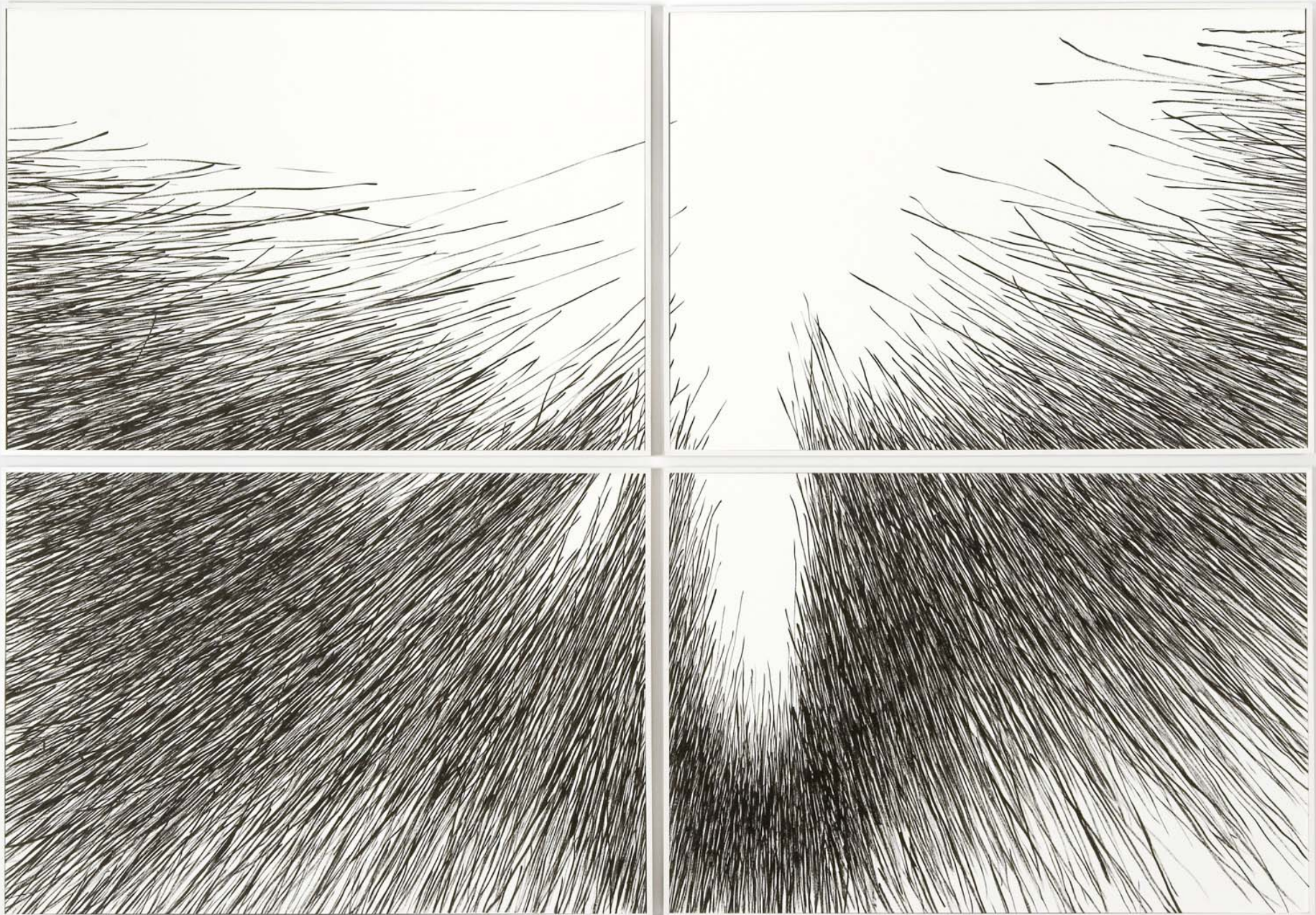
² *Pantheon*: http://www.kultureflash.net/archive/187/images/EN_P13.jpg; *The Malmo Experience*: <http://www.designboom.com/contemporary/neto.html>; *Extase*: http://www.xymara.com/ernesto_neto_extase__2007.jpg

³ Csepregi, Gabor. *The Clever Body*. Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2006, 26.



Symbolic of Logic, 2007; machine embroidery on water-soluble stabilizer and vinyl

Systems



Aleph, the Infinite Cardinal, 2007; india ink on paper

Statistics (a story)

Statistics is a boring magic, but magic nonetheless. The wind blows in a field of grass and the stalks bend in an average way, in an average direction. Variations are introduced by the small differences in each blade (height, width, density) and by their relationships with their neighbors (how close or far apart they are, the effect of the individual characteristics on the whole). If they had all grown at exactly the same rate, with exactly the same spacing, and exactly the same height, width, and density, would I hear anything at all when the wind blows? Or would every stalk bend together, like lines of chorus girls, and cease their endless shushing of one another? Thank god for small differences.

My interest in statistics is like an interest in an oracle. My fascination lies in the subject's ability at prediction, at categorization, at normalizing and setting parameters. "Tell me," I breathe to the molecules in my hand, "tell me how I fit into the world." The molecules are silent.

Finally, an emissary is dispatched to my brain, directly to the center of

understanding. *We're sorry we can't help you, the message reads, but our power doesn't work with individuals. We can tell you, though, in terms of data collection, that you are an outlier.* Ah, well. The mystics confirm what we already know, today as in the past.

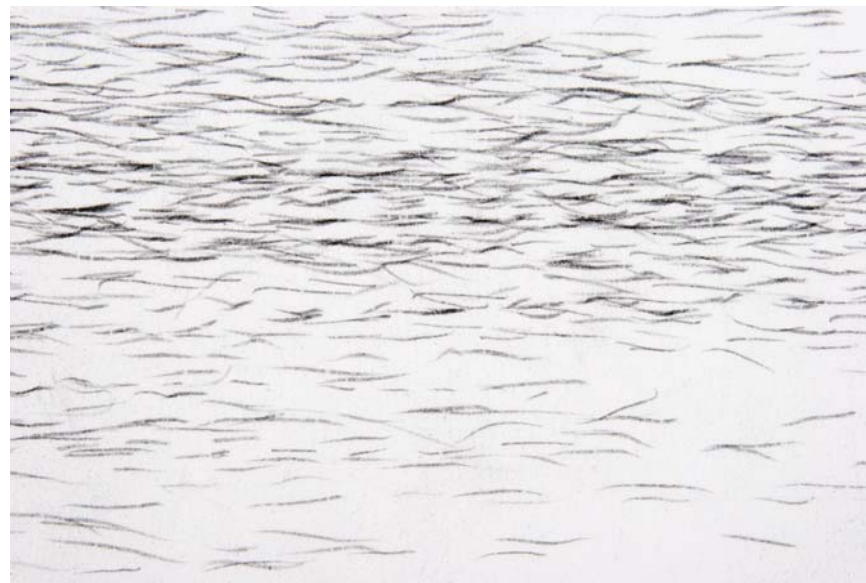
I have a dream of walking through a frozen world. Not frozen-ice, but everything just stopped. I have an eternity to examine the world for one instant. I can stare at faces, analyze expressions, follow gazes to their source, contemplate the complexity and horrible sameness of everything around me. Fear washes over me. "You're doing this on purpose!" I cry. "Leave them alone! You are not magicians, you are demons!" I am shaking with emotion. *No, no, you've got it all wrong, comes the response. We are angels. We are shepherds. We remove chaos.* "But you don't, really," I reply, uncertain of myself. "It's still there, isn't it?" There is a pause. *Ok, well, we don't remove it. We just shape it up and send it back out again.* I am puzzled. In my dream, I am frowning with concentration.

"Did you know about me?" I ask. *Well, not you specifically, but we knew there'd be someone*

like you eventually. I don't like this response. I don't like the idea that I am a statistical probability that has manifested itself as a predictable outlier of part of a group. A growing suspicion gnaws at my belly. "Hey. You guys don't know what you're doing, do you?" *What do you mean?* The question is exaggerated. They say it like a line in a play, like someone bored with practicing the same thing over and over, as though they can predict what the next line will be. A moment of startled realization seizes me and, though I clamp my jaw shut as tightly as possible, I hear my own voice respond with the next line. "You aren't doing anything at all. You're like me, just watching things."

I awaken sweaty and trembling. My first coherent thought is that we have learned from physics that observing a thing fixes it in place. The observation changes the behavior of the thing being watched. Always. 100% of the time.

I am terrified to open my eyes.



Left: *Dash (formula #7)*, 2008; carbon transfer paper

Above: *Dash (formula #7)*, detail

Drawing the Refrain: Systems and Sketches

Repetition has long been a visual characteristic of my work. Through a series of drawings I began to consider its possibility as a vehicle for meaning. My attraction to structures and systems led my focus to the particular logic of repetition. When is repetition like a mantra (meditative, awake, aware) and when is it mechanical (rote, given, a barrier to awareness)? Looking at its visual logic, the relation between repetition and quantity became explicit to me for the first time. What does multiplying or proliferating an element do to the piece as a whole? How does repetition reveal similarity and difference?



Above: *Jean-Luc's Eyebrow*, 2008;
graphite and carbon transfer on paper



Right: *Snow Screen*, 2008; digital print
on vinyl



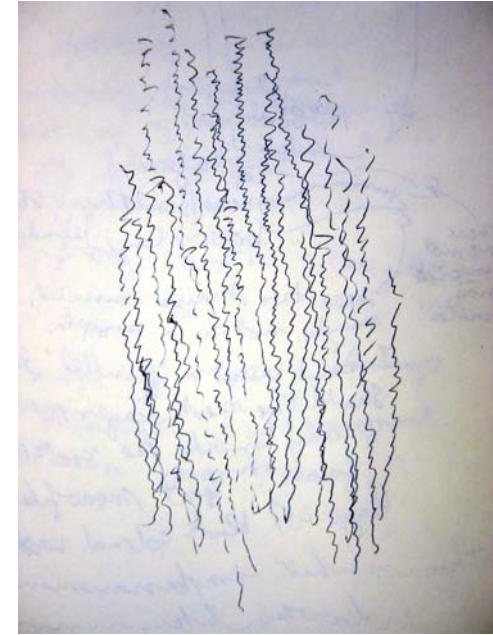
Traveling From, 2007; ball point pen

Any element can be repeated, but what's the point? If you produce a bunch of the same thing, you have a bunch of the same thing. The systematic logic of producing multiples can be applied without regard to content.¹ I began to see that the key to understanding repetition as a vehicle is in understanding the relationship between the repeated elements and the piece as a whole. To make the repetition a mantra, the part-to-whole relationship must be intensive as opposed to extensive, meaning that the whole cannot be broken down into component parts.² Creating these intensive relationships became the occupation of my drawing practice.



Travelling To, 2007; ball point pen

Through the drawings, the role of quantity in creating an intensive relationship emerged. Through the use of quantity, a visual sense of 'fineness' could be manipulated. As a group, the drawings took on a systematic exploration of scale, of micro/macro. A sense of space emerged that varied from piece to piece, yet was visually operating under the same logic. As I looked at the varying results of the application of the same system, I asked myself how it was that such different, complex patterns could emerge from such simplistic systems. By this time, I had found the storm data set (see section 4) used in another series, and knew the set of marks immediately as a model of such an intensive relationship occurring in nature. I also found that other artists had explored this kind of relationship.



Study for *Instances of Regret*, 2007, ball point pen

Maya Lin's *2x4 Landscape* is a beautiful articulation of systematic, intensive repetition. Her use of materials (2x4's) and placement of the work (within an enclosed gallery space) systematized the clear references to both nature (the organic shape of hills or waves) and architecture or the man-made. Observing the physical construction of the installation along side the physical

act of making a drawing, another idea clicked into place.

Though the process is systematic, the instantiation of each element was *not* an instantiation of sameness. I had been thinking of repetition in terms of repeating the same element, when what I was actually doing, and what was occurring in Lin's piece, was that each instance held both similarity and difference to all the other instances in the set. For example, in *2x4 Landscape*,³ each instance of placing a board has the similarity of being a 2x4, but a difference in the length and



projection of the element. In my own drawings, similarity was found in process (the marks will be made in such-and-such a way) and difference in the fluctuations

of each iteration of the method (changes in angle, length of mark, pressure of instrument, etc). The accumulation of these similarities and differences is what allows the pattern to emerge in natural aggregations. These aggregations are the complex outcome of relatively simple systems. Writing about Lin's work, Richard Andrews defines landscape as "the visual evidence of nature's complex processes."⁴ This definition gave me a new perspective on my drawings, prompting me to turn the particular lens of 'landscape' on these works and others.



Clockwise from left:

Maya Lin, *2x4 Landscape* (detail), 2006; *2x4 Landscape* (installation view); *2x4 Landscape*



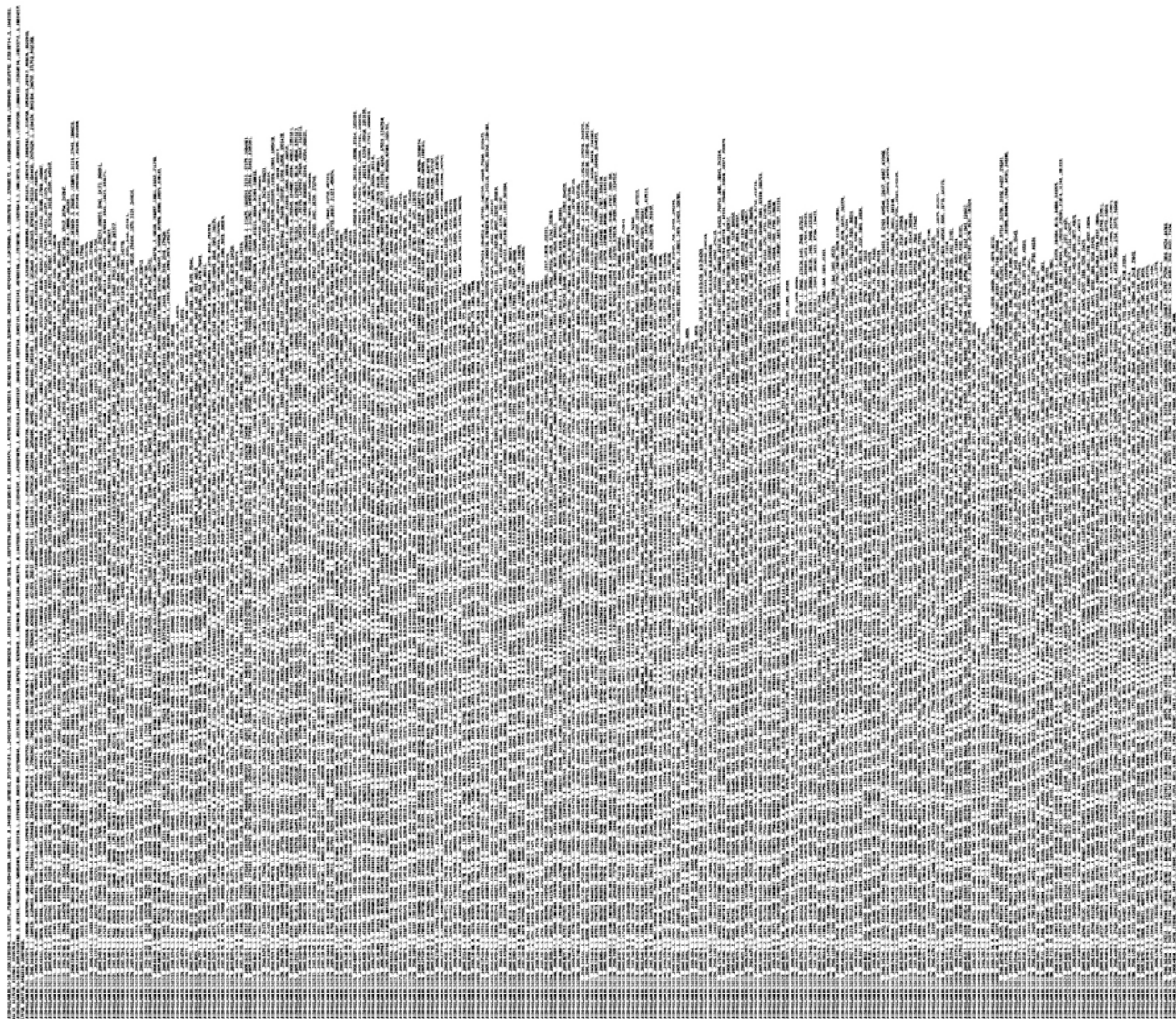
¹ Reiser, Jesse. *Atlas of Novel Tectonics*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006, 46.

² Ibid., 72-77, 106-109. Also Manuel Delanda in *Intensive science and Virtual Philosophy*. Continuum, 2002. Delanda offers a straightforward explanation of intensive and extensive properties: “If we divide a volume of matter into two equal halves we end up with two volumes, each half the extent of the original one. Intensive properties on the other hand are properties such as temperature or pressure, which cannot be so divided....” (25), and “Two extensive properties add up in a simple way, intensive properties do not add up, but rather average” (69). Reiser begins with Delanda’s explanation and elaborates elegantly with multiple examples.

³ Maya Lin Images: <http://i97.photobucket.com/albums/l217/henryart/MembersMonday029.jpg>; <http://www.confluenceproject.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2007/05/Art%20Info%20x4%20Landscape%204.jpg>

⁴ Andrews, Richard. “Outside In: Maya Lin’s Systematic Landscapes” in *Maya Lin: Systematic Landscapes*. Richard Andrews and John Beardsley, Yale University Press, 2006, 62.

Digital Storm



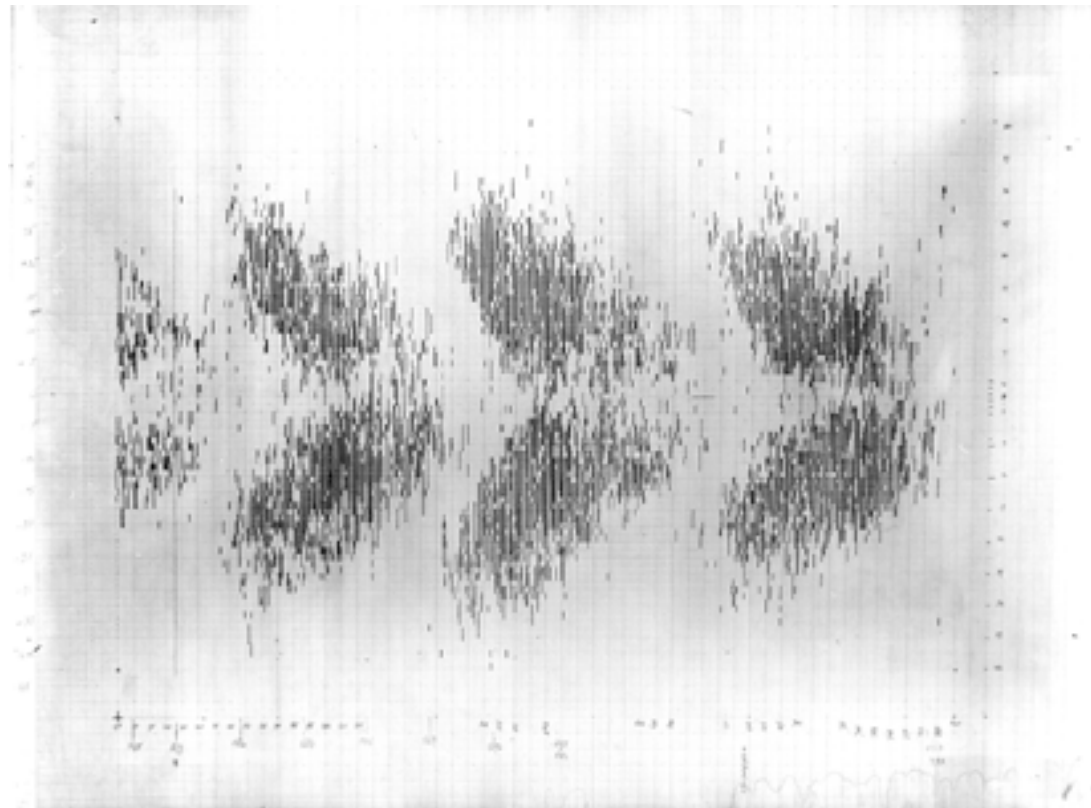
Conflated Vision

What do you picture when you think of a database?
Columns, cells, a grid of unintelligible numbers or
other signifiers? An account balance? A mailing list?

Let me show you what I see:

Ripples¹ (left)...

Butterflies²...



... traces³



... unexplored territories.⁴



These depictions are bodies, beings in their own right. Cells incorporate data, information ingested by basic unit. A database is a cellular organism, a being of nature.⁵ They change in the same organic fashion as our bodies. To function, it has requirements, limits, capacities. To be useful it must be connected to an 'outside' through relationships of exchange. To realize its potential, a database must be utilized, updated,

experimented with.

The output is necessarily determined by what has gone in and, in this sense the structure has a point of view,⁶ a situated-ness in a space of some sort: a terrain, a territory, a landscape.

So, the database and I, we share a meta-narrative, a way-of-being. That said, our point of view is not the same. I am human, female, white (mostly),

American. I do not know how a database might contextualize itself.

We have not yet had an opportunity to discuss these things.

We face each other – familiar strangers – children meeting for the first time: How will you respond if I do this? What does it mean when you do that? Do you want to play?



Storm Series

My initial attraction to the storm data set was through the screen image of the compiled data.⁷ The screen showed the collected tracks of hurricanes passing through the Atlantic Ocean from 1852-2006.

The still image captivated me. Resembling my own accreted marks in a series of small drawings, strong, gestural, energetic paths represent a set of events over a century and a half. The events are time-based, both within themselves (the unfolding of each path) and as a set (the marks reveal over time a spatial relationship, a system). Constrained in space, the paths traced are shaped by the physicality of the environment with which they occur. The event of each storm and of the entire system can be

abstracted and symbolized because of its unfolding in space and time. The events occurred in the physical world that we also inhabit, but the representations occupy a different space. This space is condensed.

Distance is minimalized and time is collapsed for the sake of our sensual convenience. In front of me, on a display approximately the size of my own face was a single picture. This map is an environmental photograph that tells a story about the ecology of my world, of the mechanics of the solar system, and the relationship of my body to the system within which it is located. My senses have, my sense of the world has been, extended. How has this shift occurred? The shift did not occur

through the image, but through my identification with the system that created it.

My experiences with the drawings in the previous section revealed the embodiment of sensed information. Drawing from life took on new meaning for me as I considered the unique visual experiences encountered in my work as a cartographer and information analyst. I realized that these visual encounters were within the realm of my 'sense data,' and as such could be the subject of life studies.



Jeremiad, the First. Found information, machine embroidery on silk organza, wooden dowels. Installed at Delray Beach, Fla in November 2007.

My GIS (Geographic Information System, or when referring to the field, Geographic Information Science) and remote sensing training and practice were responsible for my receptivity to this image as a natural occurrence of the systems I had imagined in my drawings. Interactions with data sets of various kinds, familiarity with the technologies used to capture and share information, and the problems and advantages of working with the technologies as well as the human decision making involved give me an appreciation of the complexity capturing the information resulting in this image. My mind turned on the cycle of event, data capture, and re-realization in a new form. The storm series engages the elements of this cycle, playing with the ideas of the sensory relay of abstract, digitized information, within the physical realm from which the data originated.

The familiar form to represent events of this type is usually a map. Maps are specific kinds of visual tools that have culturally produced expectations in the way that a piece of art does. A

map is expected to symbolize, simplify, and classify various amounts of spatial and physical information. Our particular cultural background also confers upon the map an aura of veracity, verifying its status as the product of empirical, rational technologies. Maps and map-making are a way of ordering the world, of constructing a point of view through the use of technology and visualization techniques. Technology has historically been intertwined with what we are able to sense.⁸ Tools and technologies provide the means of extending human sense and, therefore, the realm of what may be perceived. This opening in perceivability of environmental elements also changes what is representable as we accommodate new data to forms the body can interpret.

Remote sensing in particular is an engagement, albeit at arms length.⁹ Energy is broadcast and returned to the sensing apparatus. Event information is then analyzed and interpreted in a GIS. This process of call and response is signified by the

term 'remote sensing,' and GIS refers to the combination of this process with those of analysis and visualization.

The result is usually a visual document (such as a chart, a map, table or graph) but GIS rely on the databases hidden from view to keep track of relationships of an astonishing variety. The primary characteristic of a GIS, beyond a normal database, is its ability to discern topological and spatial relationships. This technical achievement provides a tool for sifting data to find patterns within complex systems.

The information being sifted comes from many kinds of remotely collected data. The process of remote sensing is still a process of sensing, a way to perceive, an extension of our senses most commonly expressed in a visual way. Caroline Bassett argues that beyond this extension of the regime of the visual, the sense of touch is extended and transformed in



Above and Below: *Jeremiad, the First* (installation details), 2007.



radical ways by the technologies of remote sensing. The technologies create the ability to “touch-at-a-distance,” a kind of prosthetic touching.¹⁰

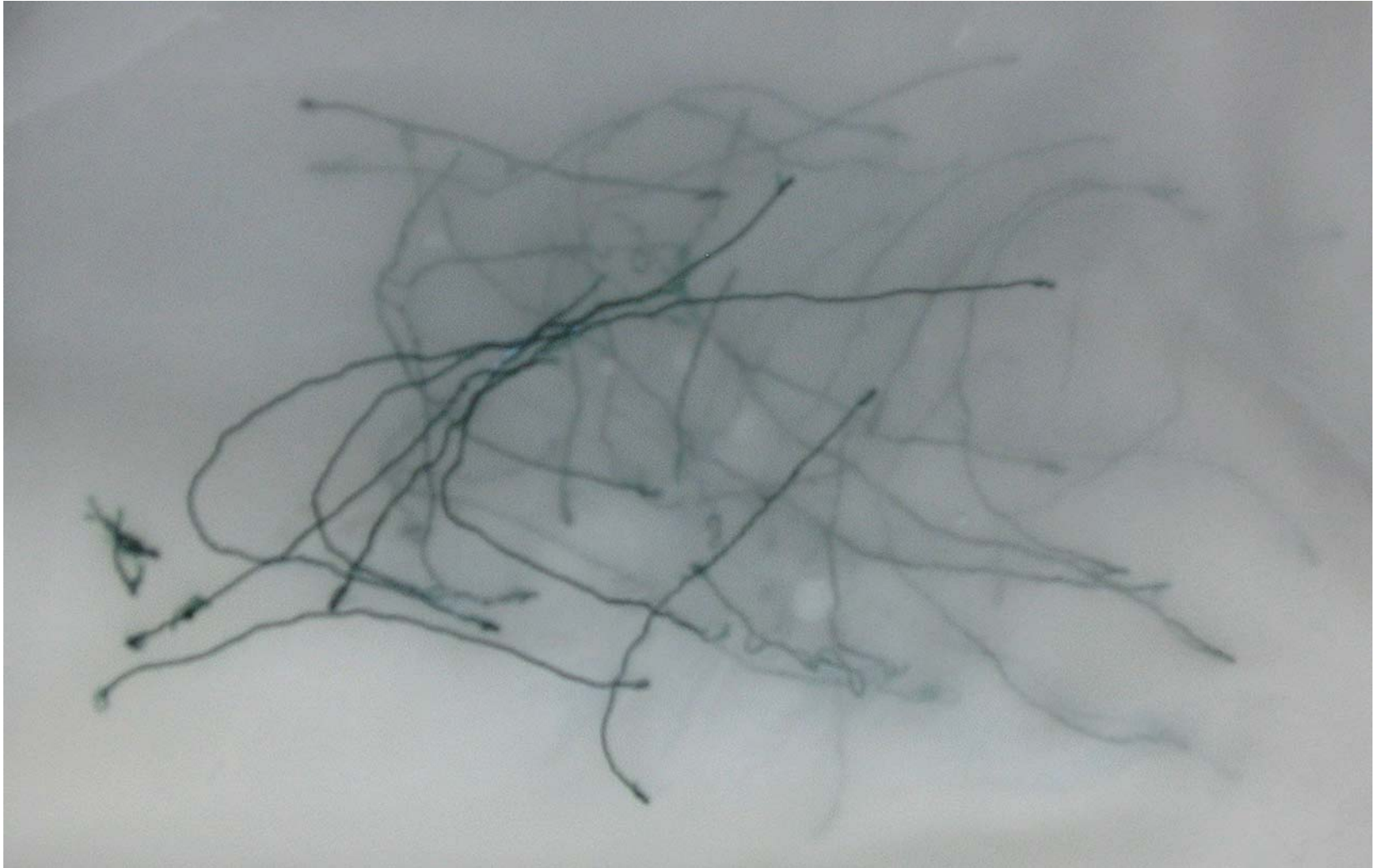
By prosthetic touching Basset means that while a sense has been extended, the prostheticized technologies do not provide a “haptic relay, such as with a blind man’s cane.” In the newly produced information spaces, touch is no longer tactile, sound is depicted in visual diagrams, etc., such that our senses are no longer used to see, touch, hear, taste, or smell but rather “to interact with the data.”¹¹ This prosthetic form of contact fundamentally changes the processes used both in daily life and scientific investigation, as well as combining and generalizing the senses for the singular purpose of this interaction.

While the transformation to prosthetic sense could certainly be inflated into apocalyptic proportions,¹² Basset focuses on the cultural implications of small-scale versions of these transformations. She believes that they will become visible as “new

forms of cultural practices based around connection at a distance, mirrored by the development of new forms of bodily *habitus*, and indebted to various technological extensions of the self.” The combination of these new forms of cultural practice and bodily habits will produce ways of touching not known before.¹³ Betancourt’s paper indirectly supports this idea, by pointing out that the “belief that digital objects are divorced from physicality....” is simply that— a belief.¹⁴

For the first iteration in the storm series, I wanted to realize a way to touch the information that I could see in a new way.

The flag installation became a way to interact with the visual data through re-introducing it to an environment similar to the one in which it originated, then experiencing a separation again through the documentary images of the installation. In these images, the works began to breathe on its own, which made me consider the possibilities of images in general.



Ningal Humming, 2007. Machine embroidery on silk organza, submerged in the Atlantic Ocean.

The advent of photography ushered in paradigm shifting discourse on the functions and abilities of a photographic image. Some of the cultural traditions associated with photographic images certainly extend to digital images, and especially images derived from collected data, as well. Specifically, the ideas of these images as objective documents, that of the image as a more 'true' depiction of reality, and the idea of the superiority of such images over other types of human production are relics of Western culture's legacy of rationalism and empiricism. Though the last century has paid much attention to revisions of this discourse, it is still the prevailing model of thought throughout the academic disciplines. Photography also caused a rupture in our sense of time. This rupture is being extended through the emergence of digitality, producing an equally distorting effect on our sense of space, including the sense of landscape as well.

By placing the primary sensual relay for data in this bounded image-making tradition, opportunities for understanding might be bypassed. How else could this information be

represented? First, I needed to explore the image and image making process that yielded *Between Faces*. From this action, questions arose: what is the image's normal relationship to the body (screen or paper sized, perhaps illuminated), what parts of the raw data were potentially engaging in a way the image could not accommodate, and how might I work with the data so that the end result might be a surprise? Seemingly, the use of the image is intended to preserve something (a

moment, an event, a memory), and data is often collected for the same reason.

Yve Lomax discusses photographic images in reference to the 'twittering-tree,' positing the idea that the image itself is a separate event—not an

Below: *Digital Storm*, 2007. Digital rendering of database information¹⁵

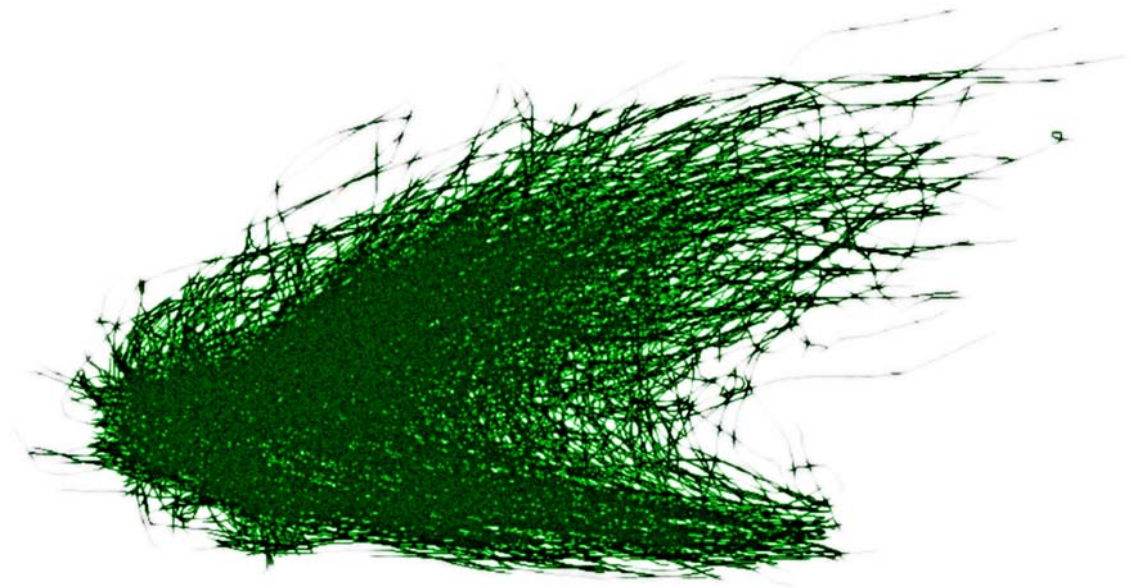


image *of* but an image *with*.¹⁶ I would extend this argument to the production of data as well. The process of selection involved in data collection results in a positioned environment, an environment from which the affordances for perception will be created in a fashion analogous to that of composed image. Is it possible to use the other senses to draw different

conclusions from the same composition?

This led to the embroidered Jeremiad, a current exploration of the space of both the digital data and the image as a surface and landscape.¹⁷ On the screen or page, interaction is with the image only, through the eyes. Is it

possible to embody data in an alternative representation that converses with the other senses as well? This kind of embodiment would offer a new way to experience data beyond an image. If I close my eyes, other senses provide a constant stream of multivariate data.¹⁸ While we stare out the front of our faces, other senses interrupt only to report anomalies—a chill breeze, the smell of honeysuckle. The rest is background noise.

Digital technology, image making—both have what Lomax describes as “an intimate relationship with background noise.”¹⁹ As culminations of the Western cultural search for order, all of our technologies are designed with the idea of reducing noise, that by increasing efficiency, understanding can be sifted out. I have a personal attraction to systems and order, but I imagine these to be changing things, organic and varied, meant not to essentialize or distill but rather to mix, mingle, provide possibility, the potential for newness.



Uses of new technologies also have an effect on our conception of landscape. As the Americas were rapidly colonized, a singular physical characteristic emerged to become enmeshed with national identity: space. The concept of vast reaches of space inspired various utopian and dystopian visions, much as the 'colonization' of the new digital frontier has done.²⁰ This new 'New World' consists of information gathered in and from the physical world, each datum transformed and abstracted into discrete, quantifiable elements meant to represent the phenomena observed. The Americas were viewed as a panacea for a host of European desires,²¹ reflected through a range of fantastic cartographic visions.

This experience translates to contemporary encounters with *new* 'New Worlds', namely, the frontiers opening to us through our technologies. What *orbis terrarum*, so to speak, is being carried into the explorations of digital spaces already taking labels similar to those given to the geographic spaces of discovery (virgin territory, open road,

information superhighway)? Jarvis says of the New World that "the geographic monumentality...has inspired feelings of wonder and terror."²² Don't the spaces opened by our technologies produce the same sensations?

Technology has historically been intertwined with what we are able to sense. Tools and technologies provide a way for us to extend our senses. Extending the realm of what is perceivable also changes the possibilities for what a landscape can be, of what is visible to us, and therefore representable in some way. Renaissance techniques of linear perspective (14th through 17th centuries), the *claque* glasses and camera obscura (which were both previously known but became used by artists at this time) of the 1700's, industrial development of the 1800's (producing the twin revolutions of synthetic pigments and photography), and the 20th century's numerable technological contributions (notably transportation technologies, computers, and the beginnings of biotech) are examples of technologies that have expanded the reach of our

senses and contributed to evolution in our conception of and engagement with the world, and thus, of landscape.²³

WJT Mitchell wedds contemporary perception with the escalating use of technology and our changing relationship to geographic space²⁴. With successive advances in technology, the world is seen with our physical eyes less often, instead being filtered through tools. The relationship between bodies (as viewers) and environments (from which we collect sense data to construct landscapes) has changed. The visceral understanding of space has been altered.

Artistically, a landscape is a collection of bits of data married to affairs of the heart. The concepts of landscape and nature are discrete. Landscape is what we can see—what can be sensed. Landscape is surface; it is the perceived. If a landscape is that which can be sensed, then there must

be a body serving as an medium—a body occupying a specific place, oriented in a specific direction, embedded in a specific cultural

practice, and a specific time. Postmodernism has offered the body as an opposition to Cartesian ways of knowing. My desire is to integrate the

two, as well as coming into being through the technological extension of our senses, into a fully integrated embodied experience.

“May your spirit serve the meaning of the earth.... Man and man’s earth are still unexhausted and undiscovered”
-Nietzsche²⁵



Details from *Jeremiad, the Second*, 2008.



Installed view of *Between Faces*, 2008. Anderson Gallery, Richmond, Virginia.

¹ 2006 Economic Census Data- <ftp://ftp.census.gov/econ2006/AM/am0631gs101.dat>

² <http://www.astro.umontreal.ca/~paulchar/sp/images/MaunderButterfly.jpg>

³ Aranda, Benjamin and Chris Lasch. “The Brooklyn Pigeon Project.” *Pamphlet Architecture 27: Tooling*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006, 68-73.

⁴ zgodlocater –Weiser, Herwig in *Information is Alive: Art and Theory on Archiving and Retrieving Data*, p. 46-49. V2_publishers and NAI Publishers, 2003, eds. Joke Brouwer, Arjen Mulder, Susan Charlton.

⁵ Badiou states: “Nature is recurrent normality. As such, natural being generates a stability, a maximal equilibrium between presentation and representation, between belonging and inclusion, between the situation and the state of the situation.” Badiou, Alain. *Being and Event*. New York: Continuum, 2005, 515.

⁶ Lorch, Benjamin. *Landscape*. University of Chicago online keywords glossary article: <http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/landscape.htm>

⁷ Original storm data downloaded from <http://maps.csc.noaa.gov/hurricanes/download.jsp>.

⁸ Renaissance techniques of linear perspective (14th-17th centuries), claude glasses and camera obscura of the 1700’s (both previously known but not widely used by artists until this time), industrial development of the 1800’s (producing the twin revolutions of synthetic pigments and photography), and the 20th century’s numerable technological contributions (transportation technology, computers, and the beginnings of biotech) are examples of technologies and tools that have expanded the reach of our senses and contributed heavily to revised conceptions of and engagement with the world, and thus, landscape. See also footnote 17.

⁹ Bassett, Caroline. “Remote Sensing,” *Sensorium: Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art*. Ed. Caroline A. Jones, ed. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006, 200-201.

¹⁰ Ibid., also McLuhan and Coffey, Sarah. *Prosthetics*. University of Chicago online keywords glossary article: <http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/prosthetics.htm>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Virilio, Paul. *Open Sky*. Trans. Julie Rose. New York: Verso, 1997.

¹³ Bassett, Sensorium.

¹⁴ Betancourt, Michael. "The Aura of the Digital," ctheory.net article td041, September 5, 2006; section 4. www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=519

¹⁵ Original data from the National Hurricane center, <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pastall.shtml>

¹⁶ Lomax, Yve. *Sounding the Event: Escapades in Dialogue of Art, Nature, and Time*. London: I.B. Taurus, 2005, 32.

¹⁷ Crary discusses the historical development of the contemporary idea of subjective vision, the instrumentalization of human vision into a part of machinic arrangements and its subsequent eviction from the physicality of the body, and the results of this shift on attentiveness. Crary, Jonathan. "Unbinding Vision," *October* 68, Spring 1994, p 21-44. 1994.

¹⁸ Serres, Michel. *Genesis*. Trans. Genevieve James and James Nielson. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

¹⁹ Ibid., and Lomax.

²⁰ Jarvis, Brian. *Postmodern Cartographies: The Geographical Imagination in Contemporary American Culture*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988. See also: Betancourt, Baudrillard, Virilio, McLuhan texts listed in bibliography.

²¹ Jarvis explains how before America [or likely any land] was charted through technological means, its landscapes were being charted across seas of imagination. I say charted, not explored, because most of the New World became, in Jarvis' words, a palimpsest, in whose geography the markings of the maker's obscured the vision of what was there. The collision of the topography with the occluding lens of colonial cartography shaped the settler's relationship to the land, as well as shaping the representations of that same land sent back across the ocean. Layers of belief were registered to the Earth. America became alternately a paradise, the land of plenty, and the untamed wilderness viewed with sublime terror. Jarvis points out, however, that these disparate views all fall under the general umbrella of orthodox Christian views on cartography (orbus terrarum) as reflective of the power structures of heaven, man, and nature. Also, Robert Lawson Peebles states that "Columbus transformed the lands he saw so that they accorded with received Christian opinion...." in *Landscape and Written Expression in Revolutionary America: the World Tuned Upside Down*. Cambridge University Press, 1988.

²² Jarvis, 6.

²³ See also footnote 17.

²⁴ See the introduction and article by W. J. T. Mitchell in *Landscape and Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

²⁵ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. Penguin, 1969, 102.

Technical Information

Equipment, Materials, Processes

General Information:

* Details in the following section are current through March 31st, 2008.

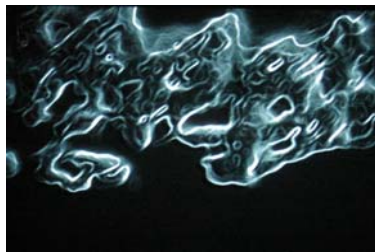
* Geographic data viewed, analyzed, and interpreted using ESRI ArcGIS 9.2 on a Dell Latitude D830 Intel(R) Core 2 duo cpu T7700 at 2.4 GHz operating under Microsoft Windows XP 2002 with service pack 2 upgrade.

General format:

Semester: Significant ideas while working.

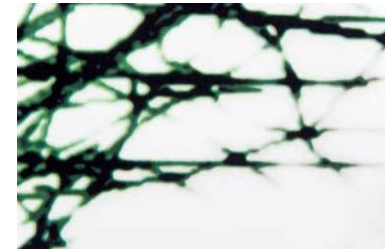
-Title of Piece (media): description of process

4th semester: Embodiment, systems (created), difference/ repetition, accumulation, relationships between parts and whole, between-ness, incremental change, transformative process, limits, becoming, event, horizon, landscape, production, being, object/body/physicality, perception.



-Digital Projections (digital alterations of photographs of my work): Digital images from the documentation of the flag installation series, the in-progress works of Dashes and J-LN's eyebrow, the completed set titled Refrain/Echo, were used as source material for exploring the transformative

potential of Photoshop software. My primary interest was familiarizing myself with the filters and image adjustment options in this software, using source data from my own work that was conceptually related to the idea of transformation. Several of these images were made into large format digital prints. After experimenting with various print options, I pinpointed my dissatisfaction to the absence of projected light in the printed images. Therefore, these works were actualized as projected images.



- Between Faces, digital prints on paper, total installed size roughly 12x17 feet: *Between Faces* is a digitally manipulated version of *Digital Storm*, enhancing the visual energy and my subjective perception of the data. Each of the twenty-five tiles is about 28x 42 inches.



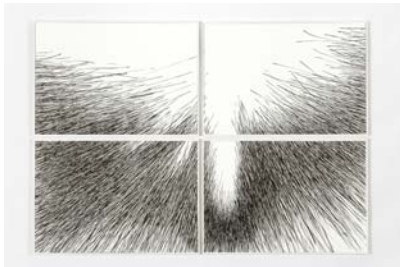
-J-LN's Eyebrow (graphite and carbon transfer drawing) 30x42 inches: Exploring the qualities of difference and repetition, this drawing was developed simultaneously and in conjunction with Dashes (see below). Both began as blind studies in system building. 30 x 40 inches cotton rag paper was laid on a soft surface and covered with carbon transfer paper. For this drawing, my initial mark making system consisted of a claw gesture with both of my hands, the tip of each digit in contact with the

carbon paper. I made multiple sweeps with the claws, using the mechanical limits of my reach and the natural motion of my shoulders and elbows to form the marks. After giving both a break for a month and creating the series of digital works, I returned to this drawing in particular with the altered images as informants, using them as source material to further the drawing. At some point the surface became sufficiently worked to start exhibiting characteristics of its own. My work then became about bringing out these surface qualities in a way that makes the images' depth flicker between deep pictorial spaces and the low relief of an enhanced surface.



- Dash (formula #7) (carbon transfer drawing): See above. For this drawing, the system consisted of dashes drawn in a linear pattern with the balled tips of clay tools pressed on the carbon transfer paper. This piece was a specific investigation of accretion and limits (in terms of tipping points).

3rd semester: systems (found), the document, body relationships, physicality, observation, limits, between-ness, technology, perception, human-ness, possibility, multiplicity, milieu, version



-Aleph, the Infinite Cardinal (India ink on cotton rag paper): This drawing consists of a 100% ink solution applied to cotton rag paper with 14 inch water media brush. The four panels are dry-mounted onto 1/4 inch foam core backing, set on a cradle, and framed in white aluminum with 1/4 inch frame face from frontal view. Each panel is hung by standard wire mount.



- Jeremiad, the First (silk gauze, embroidery thread, paper, wooden dowels, ocean site, digital images): The storm data was separated into one-year increments, framed in the image area, and printed with standard scale on 8.5x11 inch copy paper. The image area frame serves as the registration mark for successive layers. 8.5x11 inch sheets of white silk gauze were pinned to the paper, and the lines on the paper were free-motion embroidered using a running stitch. The SPI was adjusted so that the punctures were enough to create a perforated tear line on the paper

without shredding the fabric when the paper backing was pulled off. After removing the backing, the silk gauze was stapled to 1/4 inch wooden dowels of various lengths. The flags were set into the surf line in Delray Beach, Fla. Over the course of 1.5 hours, digital images captured a documentation of the installation.



- Ningal Humming (silk organza, embroidery thread, paper, wooden dowels, ocean site, digital images): See previous. As an incidental sister set of the flag installation images,

this series was an unplanned, exploratory work conducted on site when I realized that the clarity of the water would allow for this way of working. Silk flags that had not been attached to dowels were manipulated in the water in various scenarios. A shallow tidal pool was used first. Stacks of the silk panels were held and released. Images were taken and the panels were swept towards the ocean. Single panel releases followed. The site was then moved into the larger body of water, just past the breaker line, where the panels were again stacked and held submerged under water. The panels were not released, as recovery was questionable in the rough water. Photographic documentation for this series was assisted by Scott Markwith, Ph.D. and was halted due to inclement weather.



- ***Jeremiad, the Second*** (Cotton percale sheeting, rayon thread, machine embroidery) 4x8 feet: The same separations used for the silk flag installation were projected onto this sheet, using the uniform size and position of the legend rectangle as the registration mark, as the frame was outside the fabric area. Each frame was projected and drawn onto the fabric with pen or colored pencil, and at the later stages color coded pins were inserted to indicate the paths of individual lines. A zigzag stitch with varied SPI was used to trace the paths, allowing the fabric to draw up. Usually, the puckering of the fabric is avoided with machine embroidery, but with this piece, the draw was desired to release the work from flat, image, oriented space. To exaggerate the puckering as well as distress the stitches, the embroidered fabric was laundered multiple times before installation. To remove the

resulting wrinkles, a hand-held steamer was used directly on the surface.



- ***Sleep Escapes Me*** (Digital images), 2x3 inches: Timed digital self-portraits were taken in sequence, converted to black and white, and cropped. This piece exists in two formats: a 2x3 inch iPhoto book and as a photo album with captions at Facebook.com.



- ***Proof That My Mother Loves Me*** (book format, digital prints, and sculpture): Digital images were

taken of each item in a care package received from my mother. These were first included in a book along with handwritten list of the items in the box (8x8inches). Later, large

format digital prints were made and combined with architectural elements constructed from the packaging of the items (dimensions vary). A third incarnation consisted

of images taken of the opened boxes and manipulated in Photoshop, also printed in large format (48x92 inches).

2nd semester: repetition, accumulation, representation, mechanics, systems (created and found), observation.



-Accretion (Xerox copies of other pieces, scotch tape, critique room 2), 9hx16wx7d: This installation's primary visual element was a black and white mirrored copy machine reproduction of an embroidered element from the *Symbolic of Logic* piece. The copies were rough cut

around the image area (a skewed figure-8 shape) and folded down the center to create freestanding elements. The elements were then arranged in organic paths meant to imitate organic accumulation. This work was installed in critique room #2 along the intersection of two walls and the floor, occupying an area approximately 9hx16wx7d feet. Documentary images were then taken to record the emergent patterns. This piece can be recreated for installation, but will be different in each space. Due to the fragility of the paper and ink, the individual pieces were not retained.



-Symbolic of Logic (machine embroidery with rayon thread on vinyl, wood frame) 20x20x16 inches: *Symbolic of Logic* was machine embroidered on Sulky water-soluble stabilizer with a tri-colored rayon machine embroidery thread. The embroidery was structured in dense layers with a honeycomb stitch to ensure the maximum number of stitch crosses

for structural integrity after the Solvy was removed. The Solvy's property of becoming malleable when moistened was utilized with the stitching to create dimensional units that retained their 3-d shape when the Solvy was removed. These shapes were attached to 1/16-inch clear vinyl creating a variety of textured orifices. The vinyl was sandwiched between 36x48 inch oak-stained frames. These frames were mounted one in front of the

other on a 14-inch pedestal accessible in the round. Each layer was visible through the other, and the positions of the orifices moved as the viewer moved around the piece, creating a dynamic relation between the embroidered elements, their openings, and the clear yet slightly reflective surface of the vinyl. This work was shown in the exhibition VOLUME VII (Richmond, VA). Due to the artist's dissatisfaction with the heaviness of the wooden

frame, the sparseness created by the scale of the piece, the distribution of elements, and the degradation of the vinyl elements due to poor climate control in the gallery space, this piece was reconstructed at a 20x20 inch scale. This allowed for a denser distribution of elements with a greater number of layers. The vinyl was re-stretched on brown aluminum screen frame, resulting in a lighter visual weight for the framing mechanism.

1st semester: narrative, order, structure, memory, physicality, inside/outside, generic-ness, association, objecthood.

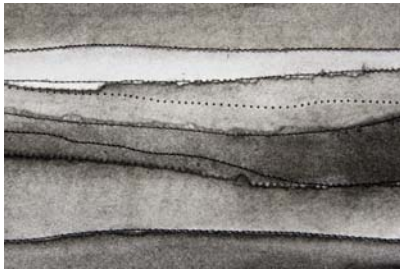


-The Body Project (Mixed pulp-cotton, abaca, and flax), size varies by piece: Plaster molds were formed with chicken wire, masking tape, and plaster and cured for 48 hours. The

pulp was mixed in a ratio of roughly 6 parts short fiber cotton linter, 2 parts abaca linter, and 2 parts Type R flax purchased beaten for 8 hours for shrinkage, color, and translucence properties in a Hollander beater at Carriage House in NY. The linters were torn to palm size pieces and soaked in warm water for forty-five minutes to an hour, then torn down to one or two inches square. The small pieces and beaten flax were then measured by wet volume, 1 part

fiber to 3 parts water, and blended with an industrial kitchen mixer with a 3-part stainless steel blade. This pulp mixture was added as 1 part pulp to 6 parts water for slurry. The slurry was paddled for 2 hours, 45 minutes by a table clamp mixer with a rounded four-blade paddle attachment. An initial layer of pulp was laid over the plaster molds and left to dry. When surface tension due to shrinkage showed as fissures on the surface, the plaster molds

were broken and pulled out the bottom of the pieces. Pulp details were added with water and methyl cellulose as adhesive agents.



-Ransom Free Road (Charcoal, cotton thread, cotton rag paper) about 6x4 feet: 22x30 sheets of cotton rag paper were covered with charcoal then sanded with various grits of sandpaper and sponges. The sheets were then stitched together using the sewn lines as a perforation;

pieces of the sheets were torn away exposing the variations in value from the sanding. I went back in with a white vinyl eraser, alpha color sticks, and charcoal pencils to recover highlights and dense shadow areas. The three vertical panels are hung by individual dowels resting on adjustable hangers at the center of each panel, causing slight stirring with air current at this pivot point. After the first exhibition, the backs of the panels were reinforced using spray adhesive and sumi paper, to aid in handling and to avoid damage to the work. This work has been shown in the exhibitions Bathwater (FAB Gallery; Richmond, VA) and +Uncharted Territory (Leedy Voulkos Gallery, Kansas City, MO).



-Surface Samples (paper, wood, hardware, mixed media): 8x8x1 inch wooden panels served as the base for attaching multiple layers of various types of paper, such as silk tissue, tracing paper, and cotton rag, with hardware of different sorts, chosen based on aesthetics, mostly nails, screws, and brads. Some copper elements were treated with liver of sulfur. After attachment, the paper was torn, pulled, wet, abraded, etc. to form interesting surfaces

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